many others have since been presented for our consideration, the difficulties arising from the same cause are by no means inconsiderable.

It is, however, our duty to pursue the latter course, and after bestowing upon these numerous proposals and plans our most deliberate consideration, and after carefully weighing, not only the intrinsic merits and comparative advantages of each, but also the difficulties and the cost of carrying it into execution, to lay before your Majesty our humble recommendation of those which to us appear to be the most worthy of adoption.

We are instructed by the terms of your Majesty's warrant under which we are appointed with respect to the general class of improvements which should chiefly occupy our attention, viz. those of which the object is to provide "increased facilities of communication within the metropolis." This description of improvement is, perhaps, at the same time the most useful and the most difficult. It necessarily involves the invasion of private rights, and often, to a great extent, of private comforts, by the compulsory acquisition of property for which the pecuniary indemnities may not always be an adequate compensation. It also unavoidably requires some outlay of the public money. But recent experience has fully demonstrated how extensive here been the advantages of such changes to the community in general, and how much exceeding the sacrifices made to obtain them. The general acquiescence in the acknowledgment of these useful consequences is in nothing more manifest than in the demand created, by what has already been effected, for further improvements of the same description. The plans before us are many in number, some being the suggestions of individuals, others emanating from district, parochial, or other public bodies. They are, as might naturally be expected, not unfrequently conflicting in their objects; but they are all entitled to that careful consideration which they will not fail to receive from us under the authority of your Majesty's warrant. We must, however, at the same time observe, that they present collectively designs for such a vast field of alteration, and would require the application of such enormous sums of money, that all hope of effecting, even with the most liberal disposition of Parliament, any considerable portion of them within any reasonable time must be abandoned. The utmost attention will be required in selecting such of them as may appear to possess the highest claims, and to be at the same time within the limits of practical, and not too expensive execution.

The plans of Sir Christopher Wren and of Sir John Evelyn for the restoration of London after the great fire are familiar to all who are acquainted with its history. The object of those plans was to effect a recast of the city under circumstances unusually favourable to the success of such an undertaking. But the fate of these attempts bears witness to the truth of the preceding observations, concerning the difficulty of effecting great and systematic changes in such a metropolis. They were thwarted by public bodies and individual interests. Although some improvements were undoubtedly made, the event itself appears to have had comparatively little influence upon the improvement of London, except that of accelerating probably the current westward of the nobility and the wealthier classes of the community, whose dwellings had fallen a prey to that calamity. Many of these erected edifices on the northern shore of the river, between Blackfriars and Westminster-bridges, upon the site of the present "Strand," and in the localities of Westminster and Soho, which in turn were abandoned for other and more eligible districts, in which few vestiges of their original appropriation remained at the commencement of the present century.

The vast and densely peopled space comprising the cities of London and Westminster, with the adjacent parliamentary boroughs and suburban districts, all now blended together under the common term of "the metropolis of the British empire," has been undergoing, however, between the commencement of the current century and the present time, more extensive and rapid changes than at any former period of its history since the great fire of London.

Of these it might be difficult to say whether the most remarkable were those which consisted in the great extension of its limits by the addition of new buildings in all directions, or those which appear in the shape of improvements in the more ancient portions of it, by the alteration and re-construction of considerable districts.

The former of these have been effected entirely by private resources, or by the spirit of enterprise of individuals or associated bodies, which in the east has supplied the increasing wants of commerce, by the construction of splendid docks and warehouses, together with spacious lines of communication and corresponding habitations, in the vicinity of the port of London; and has ministered in other directions—more especially in the west and in the north—to the demands of expanding wealth and luxury, by the formation of new ranges of habitations, which in extent and beauty are not inferior to the capitals of many of the secondary states of Europe.

But with respect to the changes under the second head—the improvement of the more ancient portions of the metropolis, — these were not of a character to be accomplished, upon any extensive scale, by private means, nor without the intervention of the state and the authority of Parliament. They were, moreover, in every sense proper subjects for public aid, as they were not designed solely, or even especially, for the benefit and enjoyment of the more opulent inhabitants, but for the advantage and gratification of every class of the community. It is to this description of metropolitan improvement, and to the numerous plans which have recently been under the consideration of the government and of Parliament with relation to it, that the attention of this commission should, as we have already observed, be chiefly, if not entirely directed.

The immediate objects of these plans of improvement are, the accommodation of the public, by the amendment of inconvenient thoroughfares, the opening of new lines of communication, the substitution of spacious and handsome streets for tortuous, unsightly, and intricate lanes and alleys, inadequate for the traffic passing through them, and, in many instances, injurious to the health of those who inhabit them, by reason of deficient drainage and imperfect circulation of air. To such a city as London, with its immense wealth, its commercial circulation, its mail traffic, its mechanical industry, and its manufactures far surpassing in these particulars every other capital in Europe, all such increased facilities for social and commercial intercourse must be matter of interest and advantage to every portion of its dense and varied population.

The constantly-growing necessity for some improvements of this description has at all times led to occasional and partial adoptions of them. On the part of the corporation of London, improvements of a highly convenient and beneficial character were made at former periods; but the first attempt to accomplish an extensive renovation of a considerable portion of the metropolis upon a great scale and a systematic plan, was made upon the suggestions and designs of the late Mr. Nash, under the immediate auspices of his late Majesty George IV. (then Prince Regent), and, under the authority of his government, carried into effect as a part of the ordinary management of the Crown property; and although the extensive improvements of a different character in Regent-street, at Charing Cross, and in the Strand, involved the purchase of private property to some extent, and necessarily, therefore, became subjects for especial legislative provision, yet they were devised in the same department, in connection with the property of the Crown, paid for out of its revenues, and involved in their accomplishment the sacrifice of a large portion of its estate.

We think it quite sufficient to advert to these circumstances to account for the locality in which these great improvements originated, especially when it is added that the Crown had, at that time, no estate at the eastern extremity of the town to which it could extend the same liberal policy. But they have proved the means of suggesting similar improvements on an extensive scale in other parts of the metropolis, so that both in themselves, and by their example, they have added greatly to the embellishment and to the substantial comforts of the town; and to the diffusion through all classes of society of that earnest feeling for measures of this nature which is now admitted to prevail.

The considerations which governed those improvements from their commencement to their completion are set forth in documents already before Parliament and the public, and stated with a detail to which it would be impossible to do justice by any recapitulation in the present report. No one, we conceive, can read the reports of Mr. Nash upon the formation of the Regent's Park and Regent-street, and survey not only the immediate site of these improvements, but the improved condition of all property in the vicinity, without feeling how completely time has given confirmation to his opinions and justified his views, and without finding embodied in those opinions and those views nearly every principle which should govern the conduct of similar undertakings.

The facilities of which the government had thus availed itself, in devising and effecting these extensive undertakings on the estate of the Crown, were followed by the adoption of a system of improvement, upon a similar scale, by the corporation of London, with the aid of Parliament. Commencing with the removal of old London-bridge, and the substitution of the present structure, a series of improvements has been effected, and others are yet in progress, which reflect great credit on that body for the zeal with which they have been undertaken and the manner in which they have been conducted. Further plans, on a very extensive scale, for the continuation and extension of these improvements east of Temple-bar, have been recently prepared by the corporation, submitted to this commission, and will receive its early consideration.

The improvements now in progress in other parts of the metropolis, together with those which have been sanctioned by Parliament, though not yet commenced, may be shortly enumerated. Of the class first mentioned plans have been laid before us by the Commissioners of your Majesty's Woods, &c., who are themselves members of this commission, and under whom, by virtue of powers given, and with funds provided by Parliament, communications in the undermentioned lines of thoroughfare are now in progress of execution; viz.—

1. From the end of Oxford-street, at its junction with Tottenham Court-road, to Holborn, at its junction with Southampton-street.

2. From Hanover-street, Long-acre, at its junction with Bow-street, through Belton-street to Charlotte-street, Bloomsbury.

3. From the east end of Coventry-street, through Leicester-square, to the western termination of Long-acre; and

4. From East Smithfield, near the entrance to the London Docks, through Leman-street to Spitalfields.

By the improvements of which the expediency has been recognized by Parliament, but which are not yet begun, it is proposed to open new lines of thoroughfare in the following directions; viz.:—

1. From Farringdon-street West to Clerkenwell.

2. From Westminster-bridge to Southwark; and,

3. From the neighbourhood of the Houses of Parliament to that of Belgrave-square.

Of these, however, the first is the only undertaking of which the details have been definitively sanctioned; the lines of the remaining two have yet to be arranged, and will, we presume, be brought under the consideration of the commission.

To defray the expense of these improvements, the committee of the House of Commons by which they were recommended submitted, in the first instance, that they might be provided for without any sensible addition to the local burdens of the inhabitants of London and its vicinity, by charging them upon existing funds assigned to the corporation of London for improving the approaches to London-bridge, inasmuch as the duty of 8d. per ton upon coal imported into London, which constitutes by far the larger portion of those funds, having proved much more productive than had been anticipated when they were thus appropriated, the charge upon them would be liquidated at an earlier period than had been contemplated; viz. in the year 1858, instead of the year 1862. The committee therefore recommended that in

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